

### Abstract

An apparatus is described for starting and stopping a horizontal casting machine, e.g. a caster for continuous casting of metal ingots. The caster comprises a feed trough  
5 for carrying molten metal, at least one casting mould and a connecting trough separately connecting each casting mould to the feed trough. A shutoff gate is associated with each connecting trough and movable between an open position and a closed position. Each connecting trough includes a drop-down  
10 portion located between the shutoff gate and the casting mould, this drop-down portion being adapted to swing downwardly and thereby rapidly drain molten metal from the connecting trough and an entrance of the mould. The apparatus may also include an elongated starter block, adapted to be inserted into the  
15 casting mould and having a threaded recess formed therein for receiving molten metal. An O-ring is fitted to the starter block to seal the block against the casting mould.